THE
Briſtol-Narrative:

OR,

A JUST ACCOUNT

OF THE

Impriſonment and Death

OF

JOHN THOMPSON,

A Conventicling-Preacher there.

Given upon Oath by *THOMAS HOBSON* Gent.
Keeper of His Majeſties Goal of *Newgate*, within that City.

Wherein the Phanatick-Relations concerning his Uſage and Death, are found falſe and impudent.

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Imprimatur.

Ex Æd. *Lambethanis*,
Jun. 1°. 1675.

THO. TOMKYNS.

IN regard that the turbulent Spirit of Phanaticiſm cannot promote its Intereſt, or delude the People, unleſs they are made to have an ill opinion of their Lawful Governours and Paſtours, it hath alway had recourſe to Forgery and Lying, as its principal Sanctuary, defending it ſelf, and endeavouring to appear Innocent by other mens reproaches. Which hath ever been the way of upholding Faction; and (although it be moſt horribly deteſtable) hath had its dangerous deſigned Effects in a very great meaſure, while credulous men too readily receive and countenance the Authors of malicious Relations. One Example whereof we have in this, that is the occaſion of this enſuing Narrative, which his Lordſhip the Right Reverend Father in God, the Biſhop of Briſtol hath permitted to be Publiſhed to undeceive thoſe, who have been abuſed by the bold and notoriouſly falſe Reports concerning Mr. Thompſon's Impriſonment and Death. For whereas it hath by theſe men been commonly diſcourſed and affirmed, that the ſaid Thompſon was by the Biſhop's procuring thrown into a filthy Dungeon, where the ſtench of the place, and of a Jakes near it, together with the want of meat and drink, and other neceſſaries, had partly poyſoned, partly ſtarved him to death; and that his Friends and Acquaintance were forbidden to adminiſter to him ſuch things as he needed: The contrary is moſt true; he having the command of the faireſt Lodgings in the Priſon, being never unaccompanied or free from Viſitants, and ſcarcely having intermiſſion

from eating and drinking, until he had by a Surfeit (whereof he dyed) made himſelf uncapable of thoſe pleaſures to which he had been accuſtomed. The baſeneſs of theſe Arts, ſo unlikely to proceed from men profeſſing ſo much zeal to Godlineſs, the following Declaration, ſubſcribed and ſworn before the Right Worſhipful Ralph Olliffe *Eſq; Mayor of the ſaid City, will ſufficiently manifeſt.*

BRISTOL.

BRISTOL. 1° *Maii*, 1675.

Right Reverend Father in God,
and my very Good Lord,

IN Obedience to Your Lordſhips Commands, and for my own Vindication from thoſe cauſeleſs Calumnies which the malicious induſtry of ſome evil Agents have ſcattered far and near concerning me, and my Uſage of the Non-conformiſt Preachers committed to my charge and cuſtody, as being Keeper of His Majeſty's Goal, I humbly crave leave to give Your Lordſhip this brief Narrative following, *viz.*

On the Tenth of *February* 1674, Mr. *John Thompſon* was committed by *Ralph Olliffe* Eſq; our Mayor, Sir *John Knight* K^t^, and others His Majeſty's Juſtices of the Peace here, upon the Act of Parliament, made for reſtraining of Non-conformiſts from coming into Cities and Corporations; to remain a Priſoner, without Bayl or Mainpriſe, for Six Months.

The next day after his Commitment I offered Mr. *Thompſon* (being a corpulent man) the liberty and favour to walk upon the Leads, and take the freſh Air, (which is not uſually allowed to other Priſoners) which offer was by him willingly embraced. I accompanied him thither, whence we took a proſpect of the City, and Countrey adjacent, and Mr. *Thompſon* was pleaſed to declare the Air there to be

be very wholeſom; and he walked there ſeveral other times afterwards (being allowed the Keys for that purpoſe) as often as he pleaſed; he having Company with him, and not being denyed the enjoyment of the Society of any that came to viſit him.

But within three days after his Commitment he complained to me he was ſick in his Stomach, and ſaid he would take a Vomit: I told him, I ſuppoſed a Vomit not ſafe for him by reaſon of his corpulency, and therefore did, in ſome meaſure, diſſwade him from it. But by advice of Dr. *Chancy* he took a Vomit, which, as I verily believe, did not work kindly with him: For, the Afternoon of the ſame day wherein he took it, he complained to me that he was very Sick, and had a great pain in his Head; which Diſtemper continued, and increaſed violently on him till his Death, which was the 5th of *March* following.

The firſt four days of his Commitment he had for his Lodging the privareſt Chamber in the Houſe, being no part of the Common Priſon, but of the Apartments belonging to my ſelf, (as Keeper) and my Family, and the beſt Room that was then void, and at my command, and had the company of his Wife till the Monday after his Commitment, being the 15th of *February*; when Mr. *Hardcaſtle* and Mr. *Weeks* were committed to my cuſtody, for the like offence againſt the ſame Act. Whereupon Mr. *Thompſon*, Mr. *Hardcaſtle*, and Mr. *Weeks*, with ſeveral Friends of theirs ſolicited me to ſpare them the largeſt, faireſt, and moſt pleaſant Chamber in the Priſon, which ſome of Your Lordſhips Servants well know to be ſuch.

This

This Room (though taken up by ſeveral other Priſoners, who lodged there before Mr. *Thompſon*'s Commitment) I was willing on the requeſt of Mr. *Thompſon*, Mr. *Hardcaſtle*, and Mr. *Weeks*, and their Friends, to procure the former Priſoners to quit, and reſign to them; which was accordingly done.

In this Chamber (having in it two large Feather-Beds, and furniture anſwerable) theſe three Gentlemen were lodged, until that Mr. *Thompſon*'s Sickneſs increaſing, and his company proving more troubleſom, Mr. *Hardcaſtle* and Mr. *Weeks* deſired to have another Chamber, wherein were two other Feather-Beds; which was granted them; and they continued there till Mr. *Thompſon*'s Death.

Mr. *Thompſon* being dead, I cauſed an Inquiſition to be taken, (as the manner is) a Copy whereof Signed by one of the Coroners, I lately ſent to Your Lordſhip. During all this time of Mr. *Thompſon*'s Impriſonment, he was Accommodated both in his Health and Sickneſs, with variety of all ſorts of the beſt Proviſions and Wines our City affords; and with three Phyſicians, who attended him in his Sickneſs, His Diſtemper whereof he dyed, was, as his Phyſicians all agreed, a violent and malignant Feaver; being dead, he was decently interr'd in Chriſtian Burial.

I had almoſt forgotten to acquaint Your Lordſhip of *Andrew Gifford*'s Commitment, who came in about ten days after Mr. *Thompſon*, for the like Offence as the reſt.

And whereas 'tis reported that theſe Gentlemen were put into a Dungeon, and denyed neceſſary Pro-

Proviſions, and conſtrained to ſuck Liquor through a Tobacco-pipe, and that this and ſuch like Barbarous uſage was through Your Lordſhips order and direction: I utterly deny that any ſuch uſage ever was, nor was there any direction or order of Your Lordſhip, or any other for that purpoſe.

But on the contrary, the Impriſonment of Mr. *Thompſon* was, and that of the other three is managed with ſo much Chriſtian tenderneſs towards them, that they were admitted to partake of all the Kindneſſes their Friends were pleaſed to heap on them; which conſiſted in daily entertaining them with all ſorts of the beſt Proviſions and Wines. If I ſhould tell Your Lordſhip what farther Favours and Kindneſſes theſe Priſoners have been indulged, ſince their Commitment, I may poſſibly ſubject the Sheriffs (my Maſters) and my ſelf to juſt Cenſure and Penalties; and therefore ſhall beg Your Lordſhips pardon, and, in haſt, reſt

Your Lordſhip's moſt Humble Servant,

THO. HOBSON.

Thomas Hobſon, *Keeper of His Majeſties Goal of* Newgate, *maketh Oath, that whatſoever is contained in this and the three preceding ſides of Paper, is in ſubſtance true.*

Tho. Hobſon.

Jurat' primo die Maii, 1675. *coram me*

RALPH OLLIFFE, Mayor.